cealed a part of the pictured future, that which Lucy hid being, in fact, the sun that was to light that future, while Edith concealed a profound sorrow that was to throw a shade over all her enjoyments. In every sketch which they drew, Lucy's joy was secretly heightened by that hidden sun—Edith's darkened by the presence of a sad remembrance.

Uncle Corny was not over-pleased at the sudden interest which Edith seemed to take in Lucy; for her silence, sadness, and abstraction had afforded some consolation to him. He now found that he was alone, without a proper companion for his journey; so situated was black Ben, and so was M'Bride, who set out upon the road with his mind fully made up to turn Turk on the first opportunity. His remarks on the road, if not out of place in a work like this, would afford infinite amusement to the reader. It should be added, however, that before the party started for Alamance, Abraham Neal took the master aside and thus addressed him: "Mr. M'Bride, I am going to intrust you with an important charge, and though I have the very fullest confidence in your integrity and honour, I feel as Jacob did when committing Benjamin to the care of his brethren, when they were going down to Egypt for corn. His son was not dearer to the old patriarch than is my daughter to me and to her mother. She is the light of our house, the joy of our hearts; she is young, she is tender and innocent. She is going with Edith Mayfield to Alamance, and when the winter is over at your hands will I look to find her bright and beautiful as the spring."

"Excepting all unavoidable accidents," answered M'Bride, "may God do so to me, and more also, if I return her not as she now is. I may bring a company with me—at all events I will come myself, and, may be, shall here spend the summer."

"You will delight me if you do," said Neal; "and when you bring Lucy safely back, I will tell you something about her that may interest you."

"And why not tell me now?" asked the master, always curious about such things.

"It would, perhaps, not be proper," replied the other. "I can only say there is a singular history connected with her, and this, as well as her many virtues, renders her peculiarly dear to us, and makes your charge a most precious one."

Was there ever a woman's history that was not a tissue of strange events? thought the master, but he held his peace.

CHAPTER XLV

EVENTS HASTEN TO THEIR CONCLUSION.

When Henry Warden left Alamance the last time, he made his way directly to the head-quarters of General Greene, and there found his father bearing arms. The stirring events which followed, crowding in quick succession on each other, dissipated his melancholy for a while, and fully engaged his thoughts. In fact, he was now a witness of and a participator in scenes, which, were they here recorded, would throw an air of romance over the performance, and cause many an infidel reader to look on the whole book as a fiction. On this account, and because also the undertaking would be too extensive, we must pass rapidly over incidents which, it is hoped, some local historian will yet rescue from fast-coming oblivion.

A crisis in the war had now arrived. Both sides, anxious to put an end to the protracted struggle, exasperated, and, perhaps, rendered vindictive by the hardships and casualties incident to long-pending hostilities, were now rallying their enfeebled energies for a great and final effort. On the one side were a thirst for vengeance and for glory, and the stings of mortified pride and baffled ambition; on the other, the courage of despair, the fortitude and unconquerable determination inspired by the memory of past injuries, and by the consciousness of being martyrs in a holy cause. Lord Cornwallis, the commander of the British forces in the south, and a brave and accomplished officer, dreading the effects of time, and knowing the weakness of his adversary, was anxious for a speedy engagement; and, to bring it about, displayed all the masterly qualities of a great commander. He had, however, to deal with an antagonist who was equal to any emergency, and whose energies multiplied as dangers thickened around him. Wary, fearless, and untiring, patient of toil, fertile in expedients, skilled in all the arts of war, and animated with an intense love for his country—with a judgment always clear, quick, and comprehensive, and a manner ever cheerful, placid, and decisive, General Greene was an over-match for any officer in the English service. For some time he and his great antagonist were manœuvring, marching, and counter-marching—one seeking, the other avoiding a collision. The British troops, well clothed and well fed, long inured to the severities of the soldier's life, and spurred on by hopes of gain and distinction, were not so severely tried as those on the American side. It was in the middle of an unusually cold and stormy winter that these operations were carried on, and the American army was almost totally deficient in camp equipage and necessary clothing. They often lay upon the bare ground, with the broad heavens for their covering, or, as was most usually the case, the clouds, from which descend ed, on their shivering and unsheltered bod